What is claimed:

1. A method of inhibiting the binding of a ß-sheet fibril to RAGE on the surface of a cell which comprises contacting the cell with a binding inhibiting amount of a compound capable of inhibiting binding of the ß-sheet fibril to RAGE so as to thereby inhibit binding of the ß-sheet fibril to RAGE.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the ß-sheet fibril is amyloid fibril.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the ß-sheet fibril is a prion- derived fibril.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the ß-sheet fibril is selected from the group consisting of amyloid-ß peptide, amylin, amyloid A, prion-derived peptide, transthyretin, cystatin C, gelsolin and a peptide capable of forming amyloid.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the ß-sheet fibril is an amyloid-ß peptide is selected from the group consisting of Aß (1-39), Aß (1-40), Aß (1-42) and Aß (1-40) Dutch variant.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the compound is sRAGE or a fragment thereof.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the compound is an anti-RAGE antibody or portion thereof.

8. The method of claim 8, wherein the antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the monoclonal antibody is a human, a humanized, or a chimeric antibody.

10. The method of claim 5, wherein the compound comprises a Fab fragment of an anti-RAGE antibody.

11. The method of claim 5, wherein the compound comprises the variable domain of an anti-RAGE antibody.

12. The method of claim 5, wherein the compound comprises one or more CDR portions of an anti-RAGE antibody.

13. The method of claim 5, wherein the antibody is an IgG antibody.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the compound comprises a peptide, peptidomimetic, a nucleic acid, or an organic compound with a molecular weight less than 500 daltons.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the cell is present in a tissue.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the tissue is a spleen.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein the inhibition of binding of the ß-sheet fibril to RAGE has the consequence of decreasing the load of ß-sheet fibril in the tissue.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the inhibition of binding of the ß-sheet fibril to RAGE has the consequence of decreasing the load of ß-sheet fibril in the tissue.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein the cell is a neuronal cell, an endothelial cell, a glial cell, a microglial cell, a smooth muscle cell, a somatic cell, a bone marrow cell, a liver cell, an intestinal cell, a germ cell, a myocyte, a mononuclear phagocyte, an endothelial cell, a tumor cell, or a stem cell.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the cell is a RAGE-transfected cell.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the cell expresses RAGE.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein the inhibition of binding of the ß-sheet fibril to RAGE has the consequence of inhibiting fibril-induced programmed cell death.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein the inhibition of binding of the ß-sheet fibril to RAGE has the consequence of inhibiting fibril-induced cell stress.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the inhibition of fibril-induced cell stress is associated with a decrease in expression of macrophage colony stimulating factor.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the inhibition of

fibril-induced cell stress is associated with a decrease in expression of interleukin-6.

26. The method of claim 23, wherein the inhibition of fibril-induced cell stress is associated with a decrease in expression of heme oxygenase type 1.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein the cell is present in a subject and the contacting is effected by administering the compound to the subject.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the subject is a mammal.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the mammal is a human being.

30. The method of claim 27, wherein the administration is intralesional, intraperitoneal,, intramuscular, intravenous, liposome mediated delivery, topical, nasal, oral, anal, ocular or otic delivery.

31. A method of preventing and/or treating a disease involving ß-sheet fibril formation other than Alzheimer's Disease in a subject which comprises administering to the subject a binding inhibiting amount of a compound capable of inhibiting binding of the ß-sheet fibril to RAGE so as to thereby prevent and/or treat a disease involving ß-sheet fibril formation other than Alzheimer's Disease in the subject.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the compound is sRAGE or a fragment thereof.

33. The method of claim 31, wherein the compound is an anti-RAGE antibody or portion thereof.

34. A method of determining whether a compound inhibits binding of a ß-sheet fibril to RAGE on the surface of a cell which comprises:

(a) immobilizing the ß-sheet fibril on a solid matrix;

(b) contacting the immobilized ß-sheet fibril with the compound being tested and a predetermined amount of RAGE under conditions permitting binding of ß-sheet fibril to RAGE in the absence of the compound;

(c) removing any unbound compound and any unbound RAGE;

(d) measuring the amount of RAGE which is bound to immobilized ß-sheet fibril;

(e) comparing the amount measured in step (d) with the amount measured in the absence of the compound, a decrease in the amount of RAGE bound to ß-sheet fibril in the presence of the compound indicating that the compound inhibits binding of ß-sheet fibril to RAGE.

35. A compound not previously known to inhibit binding of ß-sheet fibril to RAGE determined to do so by the method of claim 34.

36. A method of preparing a composition which comprises determining whether a compound inhibits binding of ß-sheet fibril to RAGE by the method of claim 34 and admixing the compound with a carrier.

37. A method of determining whether a compound inhibits binding of ß-sheet fibril to RAGE on the surface of a cell which comprises:

(a) contacting RAGE-transfected cells with the compound being tested under conditions

permitting binding of the compound to RAGE;

(b) removing any unbound compound;

(c) contacting the cells with ß-sheet fibril under conditions permitting binding of ß-sheet fibril to RAGE in the absence of the compound;

(d) removing any unbound ß-sheet fibril;

(e) measuring the amount of ß-sheet fibril bound to the cells;

(f) separately repeating steps (c) through (e) in the absence of any compound being tested;

(g) comparing the amount of ß-sheet fibril bound to the cells from step (e) with the amount from step (f), wherein reduced binding of ß-sheet fibril in the presence of the compound indicates that the compound inhibits binding of ß-sheet fibril to RAGE.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the cells are PC12 cells.

39. A compound not previously known to inhibit binding of ß-sheet fibril to RAGE determined to do so by the method of claim 37.

40. A method of preparing a composition which comprises determining whether a compound inhibits binding of ß-sheet fibril to RAGE by the method of claim 37 and admixing the compound with a carrier.

add a2